

APPENDIX A: ISSUE STATEMENTS AND GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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The Red Fleet Reservoir Resource Management Plan (RMP) Project Issue Statements and Project Goals and Objectives represent the guidelines that were used in developing the resource management alternatives found in Chapter 2 of this Environmental Assessment (EA). The Issue Statements clarify the issues and opportunities (identified through public and agency scoping) that will be addressed and solved in the course of the RMP implementation process. The Goals and Objectives respond to the issues and opportunities identified in the Issue Statements. The Goals give descriptions of the desired future resource conditions at Red Fleet Reservoir, while the Objectives define the activities required to achieve each Goal.

The Issue Statements and the Goals and Objectives were developed through an iterative process and are based on comments received through public and agency consultation and coordination as described in Chapter 5 of this EA. Specifically, their content was based on comments received from (1) the general public at the Public Workshops held in November 2011 and May 2012; (2) the general public through the Voluntary Mail-In Response Form contained in the first two editions of the project newsletter; (3) management agency personnel interviewed during the planning process including U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation (State Parks), and Uintah Water Conservancy District (UWCD); (4) members of the Planning Work Group formed for the project; and (5) the Red Fleet Reservoir RMP/EA Interdisciplinary Project Team members in a series of coordination meetings. The RMP Issue Statements and the Goals and Objectives are presented in their entirety in the following sections.

ISSUE STATEMENTS

These Issue Statements resulted from the exploration of identified issues and opportunities that should be addressed by the Red Fleet Reservoir RMP Project. The Issue Statements provide detailed discussions of the primary issues or opportunities that have been identified by the public and involved agencies described above. Although the Issue Statements provide a necessary foundation for the RMP process by representing both public and agency opinions, some of the statements may reflect “perceptions” rather than factual data. The Issue Statements are intended to clarify the scope of each concern and to provide the foundation for the development of RMP Goals and Objectives. The Issue Statements were organized into the following Issue Categories: (A) Partnerships, (B) Water Resources, (C) Recreational and Visual Resources, (D) Natural and Cultural Resources, and (E) Land Management.

Issue Category A: Partnerships

Issue A1: Partnership Contracts

Existing agency partnerships for Red Fleet Reservoir are working well. Reclamation has long-standing partnerships with State Parks, UWCD, U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR). State Parks manages all public recreation

facilities, UWCD performs all reservoir operation and maintenance functions, and UDWR manages the fishery and wildlife on Reclamation lands.

The possibility of additional partnerships that could mutually improve land and resource management at Red Fleet Reservoir should be evaluated in the RMP. In addition to agency partnerships, there may be potential for partnerships with private concessioners and/or private recreation user groups. Future partnerships should be formalized to ensure proposed activities are consistent with existing contractual and legal obligations.

Issue Category B: Water Resources

Issue B1: Water Quality

Maintaining water quality is important for meeting designated beneficial uses of water at Red Fleet Reservoir. Red Fleet Reservoir is a drinking water source for Vernal, Jensen, and Ashley Valley. Big Brush Creek, which supplies water to Red Fleet Reservoir, is considered by the State of Utah to fully support its designated beneficial uses.

Water quality concerns at Red Fleet Reservoir include water temperature, dissolved oxygen levels, and algal blooms. These constituents are important for supporting coldwater aquatic life and for recreation. State of Utah ratings indicate that Red Fleet Reservoir currently does not meet numeric criteria for the coldwater aquatic life. Low dissolved oxygen levels for supporting aquatic life have also been a concern. Algal blooms can become a health hazard because cyanobacteria in high concentrations can create toxic conditions. Algal blooms can make swimming and boating less appealing, affecting recreational opportunities. Algal blooms also affect dissolved oxygen levels, and under certain circumstances can result in fish kills.

Runoff from areas with impervious surfaces poses a potential threat to water quality. Impervious surfaces allow deposition from vehicles and the atmosphere to accumulate. Rainfall and snowmelt then transport the deposition (possibly consisting of metals, nutrients, and other pollutants) to Red Fleet Reservoir. Stormwater runoff may create erosion issues and may transport sediment to the reservoir. Therefore, development and maintenance of adequate stormwater controls around developed areas are important design elements for existing and future recreation sites.

Other potential water-quality concerns that require monitoring include concentrations of metals (e.g., selenium and mercury) and potential introductions of bacteria and viruses. Selenium accumulations can create conditions potentially harmful to aquatic organisms and mercury is a concern for human health associated with fish consumption. Bacteria and viruses could also become an issue with increased recreational use. The State of Utah has not identified *E. coli* as an impairment to water quality in Red Fleet Reservoir, but monitoring is important.

Issue Category C: Recreation and Visual Resources

Issue C1: Recreation Development

Recreation improvements and added capacity could increase visitation and revenue throughout the year. The existing day-use area at Red Fleet Reservoir is underutilized, which may be due to lack of parking on peak days. The existing campground and day-use area is in need of renovation

and redesign, including additional electric power to supply camp sites, development of rental cabin sites and a group area, creation of a beach area, and repairing the boat trailer parking lot. Additional angler shoreline access and an accessible fishing dock would also be great additions and would increase angler visitation if feasible locations can be identified. Camping use would also likely increase by providing trailhead access/connectivity to motorized and nonmotorized trails on BLM lands. Ideally, trails could also provide connectivity to Steinaker Reservoir and Vernal City. It is acknowledged that all suggestions above are feasible if appropriate developable areas are available or become available.

Issue C2: Visual Quality

Red Fleet Reservoir provides for exceptional visual surroundings. The Flaming Gorge-Uintas Scenic Byway on U.S. Route 191 (US-191) from Vernal to the Wyoming border helps to attract day visitors and campers to the Red Fleet Reservoir RMP Study Area (Study Area). Design and development of recreation structures and facilities should blend with and complement the surrounding landscape to protect existing visual quality.

Issue Category D: Natural and Cultural Resources

Issue D1: Reservoir Fishery

Red Fleet Reservoir offers anglers opportunities to catch both coldwater and warmwater fish species. The fishery has been changing as a result of illegal stocking of bass (*Micropterus* spp.), sunfish (*Lepomis* spp.), and walleye (*Sander vitreus*). This has resulted in decreased catch rates, particularly for rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), which were originally stocked for a put-and-take trout fishery. Plans for managing the fishery based on the current species composition or plans to restore the reservoir for a desired fishery should be considered. Additional shoreline fishing access is also desired by anglers.

With the presence of selenium throughout the Brush Creek drainage, there is potential for elevated selenium levels to occur in Red Fleet Reservoir. Selenium accumulated in fish tissue could result in consumption advisories for harvested fish. Selenium has also shown to cause malformations in fish that can hinder their reproductive capacity. The presence of mercury in fish tissue has been detected and resulted in a fish consumption advisory for Red Fleet Reservoir. This advisory is specific to both largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) and walleye. Monitoring for both mercury and selenium must be considered and/or continued to ensure the health of the fishery and the public.

Native flannelmouth sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*) have been found in fish surveys of Red Fleet Reservoir. The status of these fish and a determination on whether or not flannelmouth sucker are reproducing and recruiting in the reservoir or upstream in Brush Creek should be considered when developing the fishery management plan.

Issue D2: Aquatic Invasive Species and Pathogens

Spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) is a statewide issue. Quagga mussel (*Dreissena bugensis*) veliger(s) were found and later confirmed with DNA testing (PCR) in 2008 in Red Fleet Reservoir. However, subsequent testing has been negative for DNA, adults, or larval quagga mussels. The State of Utah subsequently downlisted Red Fleet Reservoir from “detected” to “inconclusive” in January 2012. The UDWR has established monitoring efforts and a boat-

washing program at Red Fleet Reservoir. Prevention of all AIS must be addressed in ways that do not discourage visitation, but that also ensure the longevity of dam operations and healthy fish populations.

Whirling disease is a condition caused by the parasite *Myxobolus cerebralis*. This pathogen has been detected in Utah waters throughout the years. Although it has not been detected in Red Fleet Reservoir or Brush Creek, efforts should continue to monitor and prevent the spread of whirling disease because rainbow trout are very susceptible to infestation.

Issue D3: Vegetation Communities

Reclamation lands surrounding Red Fleet Reservoir include a variety of vegetation communities that are important to wildlife and fish. These include vegetated shallows and riparian corridors. The steep topography along the reservoir shoreline limits shallow areas that can support rooted aquatic vegetation; however, the vegetated shallows that do exist are important to waterfowl, fish, and amphibians. Inflows and riparian corridors range from named perennial streams to unnamed ephemeral washes. Many of these corridors are incised, eroded, and dominated by nonnative plants. Some impacts to riparian corridors within Reclamation lands are associated with off-road vehicle travel. Grazing also contributes to degradation of these corridors outside of the Reclamation boundaries and by trespass cattle that cross over into Reclamation lands. The exotic invasive plant of greatest concern in these areas is saltcedar (*Tamarix* spp.), which has also spread to shorelines in many areas of the reservoir.

Issue D4: Wildlife and Special Status Species

Reclamation lands provide habitat for numerous wildlife species including birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. The broader region surrounding Red Fleet Reservoir is inclusive of BLM and other lands that provide crucial habitat for several game species, including California quail (*Callipepla californica*), chukar (*Alectoris chukar*), cougar (*Puma concolor*) and winter range for elk (*Cervus canadensis*) and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*). Important wildlife habitats, such as riparian and wetland areas, should be maintained and improved for the benefit of wildlife. Interpretation and education programs may be helpful for informing the public regarding the value of reservoir lands for general wildlife and sensitive species habitat.

The potential occurrence of threatened, endangered, and other special status species on Reclamation lands should be evaluated. The UDWR lists portions of the Study Area as occupied brooding and wintering habitat for the greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), which is listed as a candidate species under the Endangered Species Act. Potential for occurrence of other species should also be evaluated including yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), the Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), and the Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucidae*). Several state-listed sensitive species have been documented using Red Fleet Reservoir or have the potential to be found there, such as the American white pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), and flannelmouth sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*). Other raptors documented at or near Red Fleet Reservoir include red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*).

Issue D5: Soil Erosion and Deposition

Erosion concerns are largely related to unauthorized trails and roads along shorelines and erodible hillsides. Access points have been closed, but some areas are difficult to patrol

regularly. Providing additional recreational access areas and maintained trails could help meet public demand for additional use areas while reducing impacts. Drainage improvements to established/formal trails (e.g., the trail in the Dinosaur Trackway Area) would also help reduce the potential for erosion in these areas.

Issue D6: Paleontological Resources

Identification, management, and interpretation of paleontological resources within and surrounding Red Fleet Reservoir should be considered in the RMP. Any areas in which geologic deposits have the potential to yield significant fossil localities would need to be surveyed for paleontological resources prior to implementation of any ground-disturbing activities. Primary concerns associated with protecting the physical condition or integrity of paleontological sites include (but are not limited to) potential effects from recreational development, erosion, and vandalism.

Issue D7: Cultural Resources

Identification, management, and interpretation of cultural resources within and surrounding Red Fleet Reservoir should be considered in the RMP. Any areas in which ground-disturbing activities could occur would need to be surveyed prior to implementation in order to determine the presence, nature, and extent of cultural resources. Primary concerns associated with protecting the physical condition or integrity of cultural resource sites include (but are not limited to) potential effects from recreational development, erosion, and vandalism.

Issue Category E: Land Management

Issue E1: Access Control

Access control is important for preventing the spread of invasive species, minimizing erosion, and managing public safety. Improving additional areas for public recreational access at Red Fleet Reservoir may reduce desire or interest in illegal access and also promote better use (e.g., reduce vandalism, off-road travel). In providing improved public access, security of the dam and associated water delivery facilities must be maintained.

Issue E2: Fencing and Grazing

There are grazing allotments on BLM lands surrounding Red Fleet Reservoir. Although grazing is not allowed on Reclamation lands, fence cutting and trespass cattle have been a problem. Fencing is difficult and costly to maintain. At times there is a need by cattle ranchers to herd cattle through Reclamation lands on the east end to reach corrals on ranches below the dam.

Issue E3: Mineral Development

There are borrow pit areas used for the construction of Red Fleet Dam located on Reclamation lands. The future use of these areas for mineral material extraction should be addressed in the RMP. There is oil and gas development in the area, but in different geologic strata than found on Reclamation lands. Mineral rights for the Study Area should be identified, and the RMP should address future mineral development on its lands and develop appropriate lease stipulations if mineral extraction is anticipated in the future.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Goals and Objectives developed for the Red Fleet Reservoir RMP are in direct response to the preceding Issue Statements. However, each Issue Statement may not require a specific set of Goals and Objectives and, in some cases, a set of Goals and Objectives may address several Issue Statements. In all cases, an effort has been made to translate the issues and opportunities identified in the Issue Statements into proactive Goals and Objectives for the RMP.

The Goals and Objectives serves as the primary foundation on which resource management alternatives for the RMP were developed. Each Goal provides a description of a desired future resource condition within the Study Area. Objectives listed under each Goal describe a series of activities to be accomplished in order to achieve each Goal. When each of the Objectives is implemented, the corresponding Goal will be attained. The Issue Statement(s) that each Goal addresses is noted in parentheses. The Goals and Objectives were organized into the same five categories as the Issue Statements: (A) Partnerships, (B) Water Resources, (C) Recreational and Visual Resources, (D) Natural and Cultural Resources, and (E) Land Management.

It is not the intent of the RMP or the RMP process to challenge or change existing law, treaties, formal agreements, or water rights. Therefore, all Goals, Objectives, and management alternatives developed as part of the RMP will be in agreement with existing laws, treaties, formal agreements, water rights, and operating constraints of Red Fleet Reservoir.

Goal Category A: Partnerships

Goal A1: Support Existing Agreements and Contracts and Encourage New Partnerships that Improve Management Practices for Red Fleet Reservoir's Associated Lands and Resources (Issue A1)

Objectives:

- A.1.1 Evaluate proposed use activities against existing project purposes, contracts, and agreements.
- A.1.2 Formalize any existing partnerships that have not been formalized to establish roles and commitments of resources from respective entities.
- A.1.3 Pursue additional partnerships with Uintah County, Vernal City, UDWR, BLM, the National Scenic Byways Program, and other entities to facilitate best management of Study Area resources.
- A.1.4 Consider contracts with qualified private concessioners for provision of specific public recreation facilities and/or activities.
- A.1.5 Consider formal partnerships with private, nonprofit recreation user groups for provision and maintenance of specific public recreation facilities and/or activities.

Goal Category B: Water Resources

Goal B1: Protect and Improve Water Quality in Red Fleet Reservoir (Issue B1)

Objectives:

- B.1.1 Identify water-quality impacts originating in Red Fleet Reservoir and suggest ways to meet beneficial use designations.
- B.1.2 Include BMPs and design elements for stormwater controls in developing upgraded facility designs and new public use areas.
- B.1.3 Identify areas where sanitation facilities (e.g., restrooms, refuse containers) are needed.
- B.1.4 Coordinate with Utah Division of Water Quality and other entities in monitoring potential contaminants, bacteria, and viruses that can pose threats to aquatic life and human health.

Goal Category C: Recreation and Visual Resources

Goal C1: Increase Visitation and Revenue by Improving Existing Recreational Facilities, Expanding and Enhancing Recreation Opportunities, and Providing Access to Regional Recreation Resources (Issue C1)

Objectives:

- C.1.1 Recommend improvements to existing facilities to meet visitor needs.
- C.1.2 Recommend appropriate new recreational facilities at appropriate locations to meet demands for existing and potential recreation activity interests.
- C.1.3 Work with other entities, particularly BLM, Uintah County, and the National Scenic Byway Program to determine opportunities for connectivity of motorized and nonmotorized trails.
- C.1.4 Work with UDWR to maintain and enhance fishing opportunity, particularly by improving shoreline fishing access at Red Fleet Reservoir.
- C.1.5 Consider other public and private partnerships that can enhance recreation opportunity, visitation, and revenue.

Goal C2: Provide for Safe, Quality Recreation Opportunities that Minimize Conflicts (Issue C1)

Objectives:

- C.2.1 Identify appropriate recreational use areas for various activities.
- C.2.2 Identify recreation capacities for both land-based and water-based recreation.
- C.2.3 Explore ways to increase safety and security and to prevent user conflicts from becoming an issue.

Goal C3: Protect and Manage Visual Resources (Issue C2)

Objectives:

- C.3.1 Establish Visual Integrity Objectives for the Study Area that are compatible with the National Scenic Byway designation of US-191.
- C.3.2 Complement or enhance the natural surroundings when maintaining and/or designing new facilities.

Goal Category D: Natural and Cultural Resources

Goal D1: Protect and Enhance the Quality of the Fishery and Fishing Opportunities (Issues D1 and D2)

Objectives:

- D.1.1 Work with UDWR to identify a desired fish species composition for Red Fleet Reservoir and to develop a Fisheries Management Plan to proactively manage the fishery for the desired species composition.
- D.1.2 Determine and consider the status of the State-listed flannelmouth sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*) when developing the Red Fleet Reservoir Fishery Management Plan.
- D.1.3 Include objectives in the Fisheries Management Plan to monitor accumulations of selenium and mercury and provide adequate public information and education.
- D.1.4 Include objectives in the Fisher Management Plan to monitor and prevent introduction of AIS and pathogens that can negatively affect the health of fish populations, visitation, and dam operations.
- D.1.5 Coordinate with UDWR in all of the above-listed efforts and work collaboratively to identify possible fishery enhancement opportunities.

Goal D2: Protect and Enhance Native Vegetation and Wildlife Habitat (Issues D3 and D4)

Objectives:

- D.2.1 Identify Study Area vegetation and habitat communities and develop a Habitat Management Plan for wildlife species conservation.
- D.2.2 Consider plantings of additional native beneficial aquatic plants in vegetated shallows and native shrubs and trees along shorelines and riparian areas where appropriate.
- D.2.3 Prioritize fencing maintenance efforts to keep livestock and off-road vehicles out of riparian wetlands and other sensitive areas.
- D.2.4 Develop an appropriate plant list for future landscaping, erosion control, and water conservation for recreation facility and public access areas.
- D.2.5 Identify the location and extent of noxious and invading weeds, pests, and any other nuisance species.
- D.2.6 Control/manage noxious and invading plant species through development of an Integrated Pest Management Plan.

Goal D3: Identify, Protect, and Enhance Special Status and Other Wildlife Species of Interest and Their Habitats (Issue D4)

Objectives:

- D.3.1 Determine the location and extent of suitable habitat for, and known occurrences of, threatened, endangered, and other special status species as a component of the Habitat Management Plan.
- D.3.2 Identify undeveloped areas at suitable locations to conserve long-term, viable habitat for all wildlife with attention to deer and elk winter range, greater sage-grouse occupied habitat, and habitat for any other special status species.
- D.3.3 Cooperate with appropriate entities in managing wildlife values and providing public education and interpretation.
- D.3.4 Identify areas where Reclamation and partner agencies can restore, enhance, or conserve habitat for special status species in the Habitat Management Plan.
- D.3.5 Coordinate with UDWR in prioritizing areas for habitat restoration, enhancement, and conservation of areas that may be at risk according to the 2005 Utah Wildlife Action Plan.

Goal D4: Control Erosion (Issue D5)

Objectives:

- D.4.1 Inventory erosion problem locations and causes.
- D.4.2 Address erosion problem locations through Best Management Practices (BMPs) for site-specific design and construction.
- D.4.3 Work with partner agencies and other entities as appropriate to implement erosion-control strategies.

Goal D5: Protect and Manage Paleontological Resources (Issue D6)

Objectives:

- D.5.1 Determine the nature and extent of paleontological resources where development is proposed.
- D.5.2 For previously identified paleontological resource localities, develop a plan for stabilization, protection, and additional interpretation.
- D.5.3 Recommend mechanisms to identify, manage, protect, and interpret paleontological resources.

Goal D6: Protect and Manage Cultural Resources (Issue D7)

Objectives:

- D.6.1 Determine the nature and extent of cultural resources where development is proposed.
- D.6.2 Recommend mechanisms to identify, manage, protect, and interpret cultural resource sites.

Goal Category E: Land Management

Goal E1: Provide Appropriate and Safe Access to Public Use Areas (Issues E1 and E4)

Objectives:

- E.1.1 Evaluate current access and access controls to public use areas and recommend improvements.
- E.1.2 Determine future access needs and develop plans for implementation.

E.1.3 Restrict access to sensitive areas where public safety and natural resources protection are concerns (e.g., important wildlife habitat, hazardous areas, Primary Jurisdiction Areas).

E.1.4 Consider opportunities to consolidate and exchange lands where appropriate.

Goal E2: Address Fencing and Trespass Issues (Issue E2)

Objectives:

E.2.1 Coordinate with BLM and grazing allotment holders to maintain fencing and prevent cattle trespass.

E.2.2 Coordinate with ranchers regarding land access needs.

E.2.3 Work with adjacent landowners to address any trespass issues.

Goal E3: Manage Mineral Development (Issue E3)

Objectives:

E.3.1 Determine appropriate land uses for existing borrow pit area(s).

E.3.2 Identify mineral rights for Reclamation lands and address future mineral development, if any, through appropriate lease stipulations.

E.3.3 Coordinate with appropriate entities managing surrounding lands regarding any potential indirect effects of mineral development on Reclamation lands and the reservoir.